STRUCTURE

The three paramount factors to consider when you begin to search for your Griffon partner are conformation, proven hunting instinct and genetic health (Allen, 2005). You may not plan to show your Griffon in conformation, nor to hunt with the dog, but all three of these factors are equally important in breeding, working, and partnering with your dog. If too much emphasis is put on any one factor (e.g., coat, head, nose), others may be ignored. The result can be dogs that fail to stay sound, are not interested in hunting or other activities, may have undesirable temperament, etc.

Structure (bone, muscle, and dentition), must be expertly evaluated when breeding or acquiring a Griffon. There is enough information on the internet and in bookstores to read continuously through a gestation period, so we will narrow it down to the basics. The question to continue asking yourself is if the dog is going to be able to do the job you give it, and will it stay sound and enjoy it. A recent publication (Hastings, et. al) is a comprehensive book that will give you what you need to get started.

Read until you feel confident with a working knowledge of structure. King, 2009, is an excellent paper that packs the basics into several pages. Realize that there is no perfect dog, and you still need to consider hunting instincts and overall health. There is a list of “dog jobs” in Hastings, 2011, from agility to water dog, that may act as a guide for the important points to look for in your dog. The “couch potato” job will not work for your Griffon. They are active dogs that will not thrive if destined to a sedentary life.

One book will never be enough to make anyone an expert. Take the time to find somebody that has proven skills to evaluate a puppy, the pedigree, and if possible the dam and sire. You might enlist your veterinarian, and be certain that the purchase is contingent on a vet check. Be careful here, because you probably have bonded with the puppy on the drive home, and won’t want to take it back.

Have you found something that should be included here? Questions? Comments? Join the Forum, and talk about it.

[Scott, attached is the following for posting]:

Allen, Ann, Breed Balance-The Three legged Stool. AKC Gazette, 2005

Links

[www.clickerdogs.com](http://www.clickerdogs.com) (newsletter)

[www.susangarrettdogagility.com](http://www.susangarrettdogagility.com) (blog) Check out this great overview of structure from Helen King, 10/30/09.

Additional Reading

Hastings, Pat, Wendy E. Wallace. Structure in Action - The makings of a Durable Dog. Dogfolk Enterprises, 2011. Available at [www.dogwise.com](http://www.dogwise.com).

King, Helen, Picking Your Performance Puppy. April 8, 2012. Available at: <http://recipetowin.com>.